

Washington - Congresswoman Linda Sánchez today voted in favor of H.Con.Res 63, a resolution stating Congressional support for American troops serving abroad and opposing the recent plan by President George W. Bush to send more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq. The resolution passed by a final vote of 246 - 182, with the support of 17 Republicans.

Congresswoman Sánchez spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives last night in support of the resolution. The text of her speech is below.

Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez  
Floor Remarks on H.Con.Res.63  
February 15, 2007

Madam Speaker,

I join my colleagues today to add my support for this resolution.

The resolution is straight forward and simple: we support our troops and oppose President Bush's plan to send more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq.

I support this resolution because we need a new direction in our Iraq policy.

This war has been going on for almost my entire service in this House, and during that time I have heard one misrepresentation after another.

This war began on a flawed premise - that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and posed an imminent threat to the world.

After months of fruitless searches, it became clear there were no weapons of mass destruction. But three years after coming to that conclusion, we're still in Iraq.

Then we captured Saddam Hussein. And more than three years later, we're still in Iraq.

We were told we needed to be there to fight the terrorists who attacked us. But we all knew that Al Qaeda was based in Afghanistan, not Iraq.

Vice President Cheney said the insurgency was in its "last throes" and 20 months later, our troops are still in combat in Iraq.

We were told we were in Iraq to establish democracy and freedom. Iraq now has a constitution and an elected government, but over a year later, we're still in Iraq.

It was three years, nine months and two weeks ago that President Bush declared "Mission Accomplished." But our troops are still in Iraq.

We in this House and the American public, have been continuously misled about this war.

Enough is enough.

If I really believed that sending another 20 thousand troops would end the war and bring stability to Iraq, I'd support it. It would be worth the sacrifice.

But the war in Iraq can't be solved militarily because it's a political problem.

So when the President wants to send even more troops, we really need to take stock of what that means for our country and the lasting impact it will have.

We all know the statistics: 3,124 American troops killed, over 20 thousand wounded, and over 379 billion dollars spent.

And I've seen the cost beyond the numbers - and I'm sure most of my colleagues have as well.

Each visit I've made to Walter Reed, every wounded veteran I've met in my district, and each condolence letter I write to the widow or parent of a fallen soldier, painfully reminds me of the great sacrifice we are asking from our men and women in uniform and their families.

There are also costs we don't have numbers for, but they're worth considering:

How many children will grow up without a parent because of this war?

How many veterans' lives will be forever altered because of the injuries they've endured?

How are we being perceived throughout the world and has it made us more vulnerable to terrorism?

As we consider the President's decision to send yet more troops, and to escalate the costs we're bearing, we need to ask ourselves whether the cost of sending more troops to fulfill a flawed policy is justified.

I don't think it is. And most Americans don't think it is either.

As far as I'm concerned, this is a moral issue. We're not doing right by our troops, and their families, to continue sending them into harm's way without a winning strategy.

And we're not doing right for America. Our continued presence in Iraq is breeding new recruits for terror groups and eroding the readiness of our own armed forces.

We are increasingly vulnerable to defending our interests in other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, where just yesterday, the Washington Post reports that NATO lacks enough troops to fight the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

It's time to change our tactics and bring an end to our current mission in Iraq. This resolution

isn't going to do that, but it is a first step in articulating to this President that staying the course isn't working, and it isn't acceptable to the American people.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting yes on the resolution.